



## Governor Honors WIC Staff with High Performance Award

Each staff member of the ISDH Indiana Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) received a Governor's High Performance Award certificate on October 1 from Governor Frank O'Bannon. The awards ceremony was held in the Governor's Statehouse office.

The gathering was the culmination of wheels set in motion back in the spring of 2001 when Wendy Gettelfinger, assistant commissioner for Children and Family Health Services, responded to the Governor's solicitation for submission of nominations for the special award.

Gettelfinger says that she nominated the WIC staff for their outstanding performance and dedication in implementing a computerized certification and check issuance system—WIC WISE—in 16 weeks. She considers this an extraordinary effort contrasted with the year and a half generally needed for implementation of this program in other states.

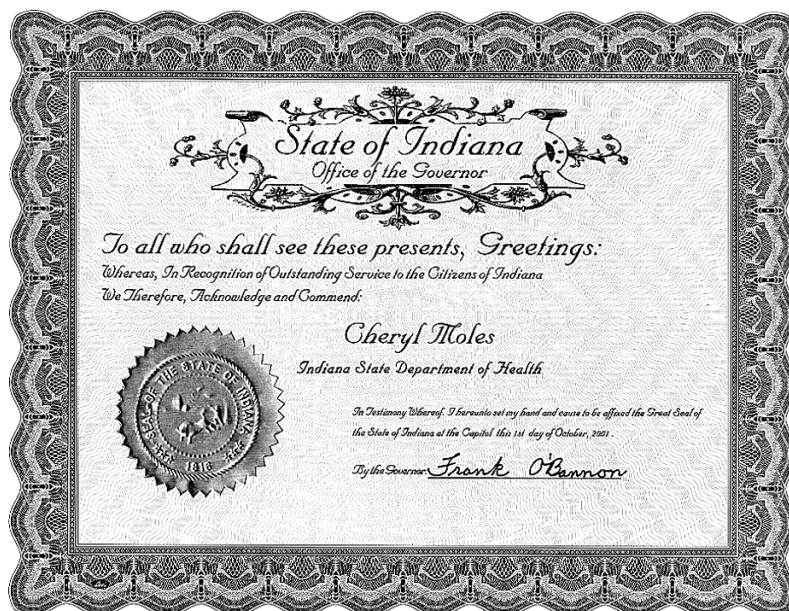
"I'm very proud of the WIC staff, and thank them for all their hard work on behalf of the State Department of Health," Gettelfinger said.

To complete the roll-out in record time required personal sacrifices of WIC staff. Not the least of which was the 12 weeks on the road for the WIC professional staff, who lived out of hotel rooms for each of the 12 work weeks, while training approximately 700 local WIC program specialists, according to Gettelfinger. A skeleton staff remained at ISDH



**WIC STAFF** pose for awards photo with Governor Frank O'Bannon at awards ceremony October 2 in the Governor's Indiana Statehouse office. They are (l. to r.) Susan Seitz, Kathy Lauerman, Dan Labus, Grace Clark, Wendy Gettelfinger, Queen Bowman, Phillip Grebe, Governor Frank O'Bannon, Elaine Gilliam, Cheryl Moles, Laura Heinrich, Linda Price, and Sharon Farrell. WIC staff not shown: Robin Griffin, John Potts, and Doug Wray.

Photo by Daniel Axler



**GOVERNOR'S HIGH PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE** was awarded to each member of ISDH's Indiana Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). Cheryl Moles' certificate is pictured above.



#### AWARDS— from front page

central office to handle routine business while the remainder of the WIC staff was on the road.

Among the contingent of WIC staff present for the ceremony were Gettelfinger, Moles, along with staff members Queen Bowman, Grace Clark, Sharon Farrell, Elaine Gilliam, Phillip Grebe, Laura Heinrich, Dan Labus, Kathy Lauerman, Linda Price, and Susan Seitz. Robin Griffin, John Potts, and Doug Wray were unable to attend.

Moles says that, in essence, WIC WISE is an instant computer certification and check issuance system that supports issuing a check only when a client appears. By computerizing WIC check/voucher writing, the system has eliminated two wasteful practices: unnecessary check writing and a cumbersome check voiding system when checks were not picked up by clients.

The Indiana Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) is a short-term intervention program designed to influence lifetime nutrition and health behaviors in a tar-



**GOVERNOR O'BANNON** (left) **CHATS WITH WIC STAFF** before presenting a Governor's High Performance Award certificate to each staff member. WIC staff to the right of the Governor are (left to right) Susan Seitz, Grace Clark, Dan Labus, Queen Bowman, Wendy Gettelfinger, Cheryl Moles, Linda Price, Phillip Grebe, and Elaine Gilliam.

Photo by Daniel Axler

geted, high risk population. WIC provides quality nutrition education, breast-feeding education and support, monthly supplemental nutritious foods, health care and other social services referrals. The Indiana WIC

Program contracts with 57 local entities (175 clinics) throughout the state to provide WIC services to 120,000 participants per month. WIC's current budget is \$97.5 million for this fiscal year.

## National Radon Action Week To Focus Public Attention October 15 - 24



**PHIL ELEY** is keeping the public informed on preventing radon poisoning. *Photos by Daniel Axler*

October 15-24 is National Radon Action Week.

Phil Eley is the person in the Indoor and Radiologic Health Division at ISDH who routinely deals with fielding questions from the public about the dangers, measurement, and mitigation of radon gas, which is colorless and odorless. Radon exposure has been linked to lung cancer, especially in conjunction with cigarette smoke in indoor environments. The

EPA says that radon accounts for the second highest number of deaths by lung cancer. Eley recommends that home owners test the air in their homes with one of the kits that are widely available at building supply stores and other locations.

Eley notes that radon was a prominent health issue several years ago. Now, he says, poisoning from mercury vapor and mold are the hot indoor health issues getting the lion's share of public attention.

"However, I continue to handle about 100 radon inquiries a month," Eley stated. The morning the *Express* contacted him, he had already received three calls. The public reaches him by phone, e-mail, and U.S. mail. He says he responds whenever he can by e-mail, which accounts for approximately 50 percent of his responses, but he also mails out packets of information to those requesting it. The information he distributes discusses

the danger of radon, how to go about detecting it and how to mitigate the problem of dangerous levels of the gas.

Right now, he says he's busy gearing up to recertify close to half of the 120 radon testers who are certified every two years to conduct tests that measure radon gas.

After a tester has passed a written test for a particular level, recertification involves submitting an application by mail with a copy of instrumentation recalibration test results completed within the past year.

Eley has been with ISDH since October 2000. He was a 13-year veteran of the Marion County Health Department, and also worked at IDEM.

Radon information is available at Regulatory Services/Indoor and Radiologic Health at the ISDH Web site: <http://www.statehealth.IN.gov>

# ISDH To Hold Immunization Awards Conferences October 22, 24, 26

The Indiana State Department of Health Immunization Program will hold a series of awards conferences to honor immunization providers who have achieved immunization rates greater than 90 percent.

The conferences will also give health care providers the opportunity to get updates on immunization issues.

The awards conferences will be held from 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. on:

■ **Monday, October 22** at the Holiday Inn City Center, South Bend

Keynote Speaker is James Conway, BS, MD, FAAP, a clinical assistant professor with the Department of Pediatrics at Riley Hospital

■ **Wednesday, October 24** at the Jasper Holiday Inn, Jasper  
Keynote Speaker is William Atkinson, MD, MPH, a medical epidemiologist in the National Immunization Program at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

■ **Friday, October 26** at the Valle Vista Golf and Conference Center,

Greenwood Keynote Speaker is Paul Kwo, MD, a clinical assistant professor of medicine at Indiana University Medical Center

Donna Weaver, MN, RN, the nurse educator for the Training and Education Branch, National Immunization Program, CDC, will be a featured speaker at all three of the conferences.

Health care professionals interested in attending the conferences can contact Gloria Redfern, Indiana State Department of Health at 317-233-7704 for more information.

## Research Paper Examines Causes of Hepatitis C Reporting Discrepancies

Elizabeth Hamilton-Byrd, M.D. will deliver a paper, "Assessing the diagnosis and treatment of viral hepatitis C patients in Indiana for 1999" at the 129th Annual Meeting of the American Public Health Association to be held in Atlanta, October 21-25.

The paper outlines findings of research conducted by Dr. Hamilton-Byrd in concert with four other investigators who were her classmates in the Masters of Public Health program at the Indiana University Medical School, Indianapolis.

The need for the research project was suggested by data collected by the ISDH Epidemiology Resource Center that showed the voluntary submission of hepatitis C confirmatory test reports in 1998-99 had been received from labs for only 30 percent of those patients who had previously been reported as testing positive for hepatitis C in a standard (enzyme immunoassay) screening test.

What the research project set out to determine was the reason for the low

percentage of confirmatory test reports compared to the volume of positive screening reports received.

Dr. Hamilton-Byrd says that the national death toll caused by hepatitis C runs between 8,000 and 10,000 annually. She says it is a difficult disease to treat. However, if caught in time, up to 45 percent of persons with the disease can be cured with 48 weeks of appropriate pharmaceutical treatment, according to Dr. Hamilton-Byrd. Doctors consider a positive confirmatory test to be mandatory before prescribing a treatment regimen.

Dr. Hamilton-Byrd says the research team faxed one-page questionnaires to 229 randomly selected physicians for whom a confirmatory test report had not been submitted following submission of a positive screening report. Responses were received from 151 (65.9 percent) of the physicians contacted.

The research survey established that a worst case scenario—that 70 percent of the positively screened patients received no further treatment—was not true. In fact, the survey showed that 65 percent of the patients with no follow-up reporting had actually been administered a confirmatory test by the attending physician

or had been appropriately referred for the test; however, these tests had not been reported to ISDH.

Dr. Hamilton-Byrd says that for most of the remaining 35 percent of cases without a follow-up report of a confirmatory test, there was a plausible reason, like the patient did not return for a scheduled test. Dr. Hamilton-Byrd says that the evidence does not suggest that physicians were negligent in treating patients.

Study recommendations stressed the importance of reporting all hepatitis C testing and suggested that physicians also be urged to administer a follow-up confirmatory test for each hepatitis C screening test showing positive results.

Dr. Hamilton-Byrd praised the work of her four classmates and the "two excellent ISDH preceptors: Julie Butwin, who was very involved with us in the actual conduct of the study and State Epidemiologist Bob Teclaw, DVM who provided overall guidance as well as specific help on sample selection."

In October 2000, new Indiana administrative code became effective requiring that laboratories report the results of both screening and confirmatory tests for hepatitis C.



Elizabeth Hamilton-Byrd, M.D.  
*Photo by Daniel Axler*



# New Schools Join 2001 Walk-Your-Child-to-School Day Campaign

A clear bright morning October 2 heralded Walk-Your-Child-to-School Day 2001. Casey McIntire, Governor's Council for Physical Fitness and Sports, was encouraged to see many children from Indianapolis Public Schools #78 and #72 walking with parents from home to school. Both schools are located on Indianapolis' Eastside.

McIntire was involved as a member of this year's Indianapolis Walk-Your-Child-to-School Day event-planning committee.

"Along the routes from neighborhoods to the schools, a combined crew of 30 volunteers helped assure that safe walking precautions were observed by the children and hazards to safe walking were recognized and noted, like dogs not tied up," McIntire said. The volunteers comprised adults from the Prosecutor's Office, I.P.D. officers on bicycles, staff from Riley Hospital, teachers, parents, and members of the Indianapolis Safe Kids Coalition.

Advance preparations for October 2 included flyers sent home with students to their parents encouraging them to accompany their child on the walk to school. The flyers also encouraged parents to observe hazards to safe walking, if any, so that they could be reported through appropriate channels for correction by city traffic planners, the police, or the county health department. IPS #72 children also participated in a safe-walking poster contest.

Following arrival at the schools an IPD district captain delivered safe-walking pep talks at each of the schools.

McIntire believes that this year's work will lead to developing a "blue-print" to replicate the special day in new locations throughout Indiana in 2002. To that end, he says that advance planning for next year's event will start next month.

He'll be working on some marketing strategies to assure getting inside help from the schools he plans to approach. McIntire is convinced that, beyond important volunteer assistance from the community and parents, for a Walk-Your-Child-to-School Day event to be successful, it requires assistance from personnel within the schools. In the schools he'll be contacting, he'll be looking for a principal or physical education teacher, or any teacher



WALK-YOUR-CHILD-TO-SCHOOL DAY volunteers (above) at IPS School #78 and students (below) arriving from their walk to school October 2.



committed to make walking to school a workable and important means to integrate physical fitness into the lifestyles of the children who are students attending their school.

McIntire says he's pleased that the event has won some new allies this year, one especially, in the person of Melissa Richards, principal of IPS school #78, who worked hard to assure the 2001 event's success at her school

and has also volunteered to join the planning task force for next year's statewide Walk-Your-Child-to-School Day initiative.

## ISDH Web Site Features Bioterrorism Information

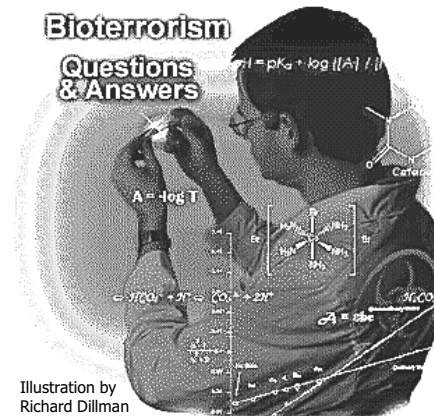


Illustration by Richard Dillman

BIOTERRORISM PREPAREDNESS INFORMATION is a click away at the ISDH Web site: <http://www.statehealth.IN.gov>.

In response to frequently asked questions about bioterrorism preparedness from the public and reporters, ISDH has posted an array of information in a Q and A format at its Web site. Answers address recommended precautions the public should take, questions about vaccines, gas masks, antibiotics, and measures that the health department has been taking to help protect the public.



Indiana State  
Department of Health

## Express

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